

FSA NEWS

January 2008

Fallon County FSA Office
P.O. Box 1516
Baker, Montana 59313
PH: (406) 778-2238
Fax: (406) 778-2965

County Committee Members

Robert Wenz, Chairr
Brian Rustad, Regular Member
Maralee Burdick, New COC Member

FSA Office Personnel

Maria L. Braun, CED - Ext. 102
Kay Varner, PT - Ext. 104
Sonja Wiseman, PT - Ext. 100
Ray Allerdings, Field - Ext. 108
Sharon Gookin- Temp. - Ext. 107
Robin Markuson - Farm Loan Officer (406) 775-6359 Ext. 110

Dates to Remember:

January 10: FSA County Committee meeting - 1:00 p.m.

January 21: Office Closed - Observe Martin Luther King's Birthday

January 28: Annie's Project starts - Contact FSA office for application and information

January 31: Final loan/LDP availability date for wool/mohair shorn in 2007

January 31: Final LDP availability date for 2007 unshorn pelts

February 1 & 2: SWCS Annual Technical Workshop, Sheraton Hotel, Billings

February 18: Office Closed - President's Day

March 15: Deadline to purchase coverage for 2008 NAP - perennial and spring seeded crops

March 15: Sales closing date for crop insurance on spring seeded crops. See your local insurance agent.

Signup Still Underway for Disaster Assistance Programs

Signup continues for the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), and the Crop Disaster Program (CDP). Producers in primary counties declared secretarial disaster areas or certain counties declared presidential disaster areas between January 1, 2005 and February 28, 2007 or producers located in counties contiguous to those counties are eligible. CDP does not require a disaster declaration. Fallon County has half of the livestock producers that **have not** been into the office to report their losses. Letters were sent to each livestock producer in October and program reminders have been published in the last three (3) newsletters.

Please contact the office for further explanation of the programs or to make an appointment to discuss eligibility.

Census of Agriculture Coming Soon

Beginning December 28, 2007, the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) will mail out Census of Agriculture forms to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Forms may be returned by mail or, for the first time, forms may be filled out online via a secure web site.

Conducted every five years by USDA, the Census is a complete count of the nation's farm and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. The Census provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation.

For more information about the 2007 Census of Agriculture, contact the NASS Montana Field Office at 406/441-1240 or 1-800-835-2612 or logon to the Montana Agriculture Statistics website at <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov>

FSA Website

Producers may access FSA information and forms on the Montana Internet site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

Congratulations!!!!

Congratulations to Maralee Burdick who was elected to the three (3) year term as Fallon County FSA Committee person to represent the LAA 2 voting community. Thank you to those who took the time to vote. A committee person has a very important job for USDA and also the producers in Fallon County. We look forward to working for and with Maralee for the next three (3) years.

The Fallon County Committee regularly meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month, unless there would be program deadlines or a schedule conflict that needs accommodating. Feel free to attend a meeting and visit with your County Committee members.

January 31 Deadline to Request 2007 Wool and Mohair Loans and LDPs

Wool and mohair producers have until January 31 to apply for either a nine-month, nonrecourse marketing assistance loan or a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) for 2007-crop wool or mohair.

The national loan rate for ungraded wool offered as collateral will secure a non-recourse loan made at a rate of 40 cents per pound. For graded wool, loans will be based on the statutory rate of \$1.00 per pound. Producers who desire a non-recourse loan for mohair will receive the statutory rate of \$4.20 per pound. Loan rates will be adjusted based on a schedule of quality premiums and discounts applicable to the 2007 marketing year. The repayment amount per pound for mohair and for both graded and ungraded wool will be announced at close of business each Tuesday, and can be found on the Montana FSA website at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>.

For Montana the loan rates are divided into two regions by county. Producers should pick the correct region for their operation and then check the posted rates at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd/MKTPRICLEAN2.htm> for region 2 counties and at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd/MKTPRICLEAN3.htm> for region 3 counties.

Instead of obtaining a loan, producers may request LDPs on these commodities. The LDP rates will be the difference between the per pound loan rate and the weekly announced repayment rate. The repayment prices reflect prices being offered in the current market.

Spousal Signature:

A husband and wife may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) programs in which either has an individual interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office from either spouse. Exceptions include claim settlements, power of attorney forms and signatory authority for an entity.

FSA'S FARM LOAN PROGRAM

Each year, Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides direct and guaranteed loans to America's farmers and ranchers. Every year, the Agency targets a portion of its direct and guaranteed funds to beginning farmers and ranchers. A beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity who (1) has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years; (2) meets the eligibility requirements of the program to which he/she is applying; (3) substantially participates in the operation. Some of the **eligible loan purposes** are:

- payment of annual operating expenses,
- purchase of livestock,
- purchase of machinery & equipment,
- payment of costs associated with land and water development for conservation or use purposes,
- refinancing of chattel debts,
- acquiring or enlarging a farm or ranch, and
- capital improvements on real estate

In 2007, Montana Farm Loan staff closed loans that totaled \$37,041,441, of which over 26% went to Beginning Farmer and Socially Disadvantaged applicants. For Carter and Fallon counties, total loans and subordinations issued totaled \$2,133,910.

Funding is limited, so the sooner you start the process, the better. Applications for loan assistance may be obtained from the Carter County FSA Office or the Fallon County FSA Office. Please call (406) 775-6359 in Ekalaka or (406) 778-2238 in Baker to obtain further information.

NAP DEADLINE FOR SPRING SEEDED CROPS – MARCH 15, 2008

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE NAP DEADLINE FOR SPRING-SEEDED CROPS – MARCH 15, 2008. Remember MARCH 15, 2008 NAP DEADLINE!!!!!! Also, the Multi-peril crop insurance spring-seeded crop is March 15.

Insurance may be available for feed type barley varieties that are harvested for seed/grain, please check with your insurance agent for information.

NRCS NEWS

EQIP Contract Development and Deadlines

Interested landowners must first contact their local county Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office. NRCS staff will meet with the landowner to discuss the landowner's ideas and discuss alternatives and recommendations. Together a conservation plan is developed that incorporates the landowner's objectives with ideas to help make their resources more sustainable.

If conservation practices are identified as needed, a landowner can decide to apply for any one of a handful of conservation programs offered by USDA. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers cost share assistance up to a maximum of 75% (90% for Beginning Farmers or Limited Resource Producers) for installing certain new conservation practices or incentive payments for trying new management techniques. Incentive payments may be provided for up to three (3) year to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use without the incentive. If the landowner decides to apply for EQIP, the landowner completes the form CCC-1200 obtained at their local USDA Service Center or from the National NRCS EQIP Web Page. The NRCS staff person will "rank" or score the application based on a ranking evaluation specific for their county or resource concern (see How EQIP Works). This score will be compared with other applications in the specific EQIP funding pool. If accepted, the landowner enters into a multi-year contract (from 1 to 10 years) with USDA that schedules the implementation of the practices in a time frame that works for the individual.

The deadline for applying for EQIP funding in 2007 was June 1, 2007. Applications received after June 1 2007 will be considered for funding in fiscal year 2009. NRCS accepts conservation program applications year-round, however, if you have conservation practices you've been considering, please contact the office immediately. If you have questions about what practices are cost-shared or how the contracts are managed, please contact Ann or Kalyn at the Baker NRCS Field Office at (406) 778-2238 x. 3. NOTE: The 2002 Farm Bill is scheduled to expire at the end of the fiscal year 2007. As such, a new farm bill may be implemented in 2008 which could change the specific program information listed above.

Annie's Project

Montana MarketManager will usher Annie's Project into Montana starting in January 2008. Annie's Project will be delivered in six 3-hour sessions at 12 locations around Montana. Each Monday evening session will run from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Registration is \$100.

Class locations:

Baker – Baker High School

Bozeman – Burns Telecom Center, MSU

Culbertson – Roosevelt Memorial Hospital 1

Dillon – University of Montana – Western

Glasgow – Frances Mahon Deaconess Hospital

Great Falls – MSU College of Technology

Havre – MSU Northern

Lewistown – Central Montana Education Center

Miles City – Miles City Community College

Rapelje – Rapelje High School

Scobey – Scobey High School

Shelby – Marias Medical Center

Sidney – ARS Center

For registration information call the Montana Grain Growers office at 406/761-4596 or logon to their website: www.montanamarketmanager.org/Education&Reference/WorkshopCalendar.

Submission of Applications via E-Government

As required by the Freedom to E-File Act, eForms provides customers with the option to electronically access, fill out, and print paper forms, or obtain secure electronic access credentials for signing and transmitting forms and other documents electronically to their local Service Center. Level 2 access is required. Step-by-step instructions are available on the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt> explaining the Level 2 access process. Contact the local county FSA office to complete your Level 2 registration.

Beef under the Big Sky: 2008 Montana Winter Grazing Seminar

Welcome ranchers! The 2008 Montana Winter Grazing Seminar is scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, Jan. 23-24, at the Sidney Country Club in Sidney, Mont. This year's seminar will feature a great lineup of speakers, a fun, relaxed atmosphere and plenty of opportunities for beef producers to swap ideas and get acquainted. This year's featured speaker is Kit Pharo of the Pharo Cattle Company in Cheyenne Wells, Colo. Kit's presentation is entitled "From Production to Profit in Ranching." His thoughts and philosophies are geared towards helping ranchers increase their profits. Kit also shares his philosophies in a free bimonthly newsletter and weekly emails. To receive his newsletter and emails, send your request to Kit@PharoCattle.com. Other topics during the first day include a talk on "Cooperative Monitoring" by Dennis Phillippi, President of the Society for Range Management. South Dakota State University Extension Beef Specialist Ken Olson will make a presentation on "Evaluating Alternative Strategies for Beef Production."

Following the first day of the seminar, a social hour is planned at the Sidney Country Club with music by the XIT Gals. Taylor Brown of the Northern Broadcasting System will be the Master of Ceremonies for the banquet, with Governor Brian Schweitzer (invited) to give the keynote address. Entertainment will follow the keynote address from Ryan Taylor of North Dakota. The second day of the event will begin with Wayne Burleson speaking on "The Art of Pasture Walking for Solutions." Next will be Dr. Rachel Endecott, the Montana State University Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, with a talk on Biological Risk Management. The seminar will conclude with a local producer panel – topics will include using local by-products for feed supplement, and the effects of oil development in Richland County on area beef producers.

This year's Winter Grazing Seminar is hosted by the Richland County Conservation District, in cooperation with the Governor's Rangeland Resources Executive Committee (RREC) and the Montana Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC). Registration for the seminar begins at 10 a.m. on Wednesday January 23rd. A pre-registration fee of \$35.00 will be accepted through Jan. 11 and \$40.00 thereafter. For a registration form and more information, contact Julie Goss, Administrator, Richland County Conservation District at julie.goss@mt.nacdn.net (406) 433-2103 x101 or Heidi Olbert, State Coordinator, Rangeland Resources Program at holbert@mt.gov (406) 444-6619.

Change in Farming Operation or Address

Producers are reminded to notify this office to report change in address or ownership. This is vital to assist this office in keeping records.

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